

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 07121 230558Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 ABF-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 RSC-01

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R 230505Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6200

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 7121

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: AFIN AFSP CB

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PREFERENTIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 5911

B. STATE 91851

C. PHNOM PENH 7102

D. STATE 106760

FROM AMBASSADOR

REPLY BY TREASURY DEPT. THAT OUR REQUEST FOR PREFERENTIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE WILL BE ANSWERED "IN NEXT FEW WEEKS" IS DEPRESSING. I AM DISMAYED BY THIS DELAY AND SUGGEST THAT TREASURY JUXTAPOSE ITS REPLY TO AP STORY OUT OF PHNOM PENH SAME DAY WHICH REPORTS "THREE PERSONS KILLED AND FOUR WOUNDED WHEN INSURGENT FORCES FIRED ROCKETS INTO PHNOM PENH. IT WAS THE THIRD ROCKET ATTACK IN TWO DAYS". I SHOULD ADD THAT AT LEAST ONE ROCKET HIT NEAR HOME OF ONE OF OUR ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHES. WHILE I FULLY REALIZE THAT WAR RISK IS NO REASON FOR GRANTING PREFERENTIAL EXCHANGE RATE, IT IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR WHICH MUST NOT BE LOST SIGHT OF IN EVALUATING OUR REQUEST. APPROVAL OF PREFERENTIAL EXCHANGE RATE WOULD ALSO DEFUSE ACrimonious DEBATE ABOUT WASHINGTON DECISION TO ELIMINATE COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE FOR KHMER REPUBLIC. LAST WEEK I LOST \$244 IN FROZEN FOODS BECAUSE OF ELECTRICAL POWER SHORTCOMINGS LINKED TO THE WAR SITUATION. THIS IS NOT AN ISOLATED CASE. THIS DOES NOT SHOW UP IN

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 07121 230558Z

PRICE INDEX ON WHICH COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE IS CALCULATED.

I AM AT TIMES APPALLED BY TENDENCY OF SOME IN WASHINGTON TO
TREAT PHNOM PENH LIKE ANY OTHER FOREIGN SERVICE POST. RAPID
ACTION GRANTING LIMITED PREFERENTIAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR AMERICAN PERSONNEL HERE WOULD BE SENSIBLE
STEP TOWARD GIVING THIS POST AT LEAST THE SAME TREATMENT
ACCORDED SOME MORE TRADITIONAL FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS WHICH
HAVE SIMILAR EXCHANGE RATE PROBLEMS. ITS IMPACT ON MISSION
MORALE WOULD BE OBVIOUS.
DEAN

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